

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DECISION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SECTION A

DATE OF DECISION:

17th January 2022

PORTFOLIO AREA:

Finance & Resources Portfolio

SUBJECT TITLE: Administration of the Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant and the Additional Restrictions Grant.

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

SECTION B – IDENTITY OF THE “DECISION-MAKER”

Name of Officer:

Andrew Ferrier

Title:

Chief Executive

Pursuant to Delegated Powers as set out in paragraph (2) of “Delegations to Chief Executive” in Part 3 of the Constitution, namely

“To do anything, in consultation with the Leader, which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of the Council’s functions subject to:

- (i) the matter being regarded as an emergency or urgent situation; and
- (ii) a report back to the Council, Cabinet or Committee concerned. “

SECTION C – SUMMARY

Background

Government has announced further grant funding to support businesses in the Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation sectors that have been adversely affected by the Omicron variant of coronavirus.. Both these grants are fully funded by Central Government and are to be administered by business rate billing Local Authorities. The grants which are the subject of this decision are:

- Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant
- The Additional Restrictions Grant.

A summary of each of the Grants is as follows:

1. Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant

This Scheme enables grants to be made to businesses in sectors expected to suffer most as a result of the Omicron variant of coronavirus. Depending on rateable value, the Scheme sets out eligibility criteria under which businesses may receive one-off funding of either £2,667, £4,000 or £6,000.

2. Additional Restrictions Grant

This Scheme provides grant funding to Local Authorities to support businesses that have been affected by the Omicron variant of coronavirus but who are not eligible for the Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant. Local Authorities have discretion to determine the eligibility criteria and funding levels for this grant.

All grants awarded under the Additional Restrictions Grant must be made by 31st March 2020. All schemes set out certain exclusions to eligibility.

Payments under all Schemes are subject to the State Aid / Subsidy Control regime and any business which has reached the limit of payments permissible under the De Minimis and UK Covid-19 Temporary State Aid Framework will not be eligible for further grant funding. Applicants will be required to sign a State Aid compliance declaration. The New Burdens cost regime also is expected to apply, providing payment to the Council for administering the Schemes.

SECTION D – THE DECISION

“That authority is given to the Head of Finance & Revenues:-

1. To implement and administer grants under Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant Scheme in accordance with guidance issued by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
2. In consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder , to determine the eligibility criteria and payment regime for the Additional Restrictions Grant and thereafter to implement and administer payments under those Schemes.”

SECTION E – REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The decision-maker's reasons for making the decision recorded in Section D:

Administration of these grant funds does not fall within the scope of existing delegated authority. Government and businesses will expect applications to be determined and grants to be paid out as soon as practically possible. Therefore appropriate authority is required to meet these expectations and determine applications and pay the grants to eligible businesses.

There is no convenient meeting of the Council or Cabinet to which this decision could be brought. Waiting to bring the decision to Committee would cause unacceptable delay in implementing the Schemes and likely hardship to eligible Grant recipients. All eligible grants under these schemes must be paid the Council before 31st March 2022.

The Covid-19 pandemic, and in particular the Omicron variant, its associated restrictions and the need to immediately implement these grant Schemes constitute an ‘urgent’ situation for the purposes of the delegation described at Section B above.

SECTION F – DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The options are:

1. to give delegated authority to the Head of Finance & Revenues (in consultation with specified members where appropriate); or
2. to refer applications (or the issue of giving delegated authority) to Committee.

Option 2 would result in delays and economic harm to businesses, would defeat the object of the urgent Government funding as well as damage to the Council's reputation and is rejected.

SECTION G – OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None

SECTION H – BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were taken into consideration when making the decision:

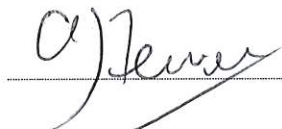
1. Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant Guidance for Local Authorities.
2. Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Additional Restrictions Grant – Guidance for Local Authorities

SECTION I – Any Conflict of Interest Declared and Dispensation Granted

None.

We certify that the decision this document records was made Pursuant to Delegated Powers as set out in paragraph (2) of "Delegations to Chief Executive" in Part 3 of the Constitution and is a true and accurate record or minute of that decision.

Chief Executive:



Dated:

26/01/22

The Leader of the Council



Dated:

26/01/2022